

# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

## MESSAGE 2:

# NOW IS THE TIME FOR REVIVAL

### **SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Haggai 1:2-11 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt."' "<sup>3</sup> Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>4</sup> "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?" <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, "Consider your ways! <sup>6</sup> You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." <sup>7</sup> Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Consider your ways! <sup>8</sup> Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says the Lord. <sup>9</sup> "You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?" declares the Lord of hosts, "Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce. <sup>11</sup> I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *Now Is the Time for Revival* is to learn how to recognize God's warnings in our lives and to return our hearts and lives to our first love for the Lord, where we will be completely satisfied in Him.

**INTRODUCTION:** This message concerns something that, although often ignored, is very important to our walk with the Lord. There are times in our lives that God gives us warnings and tries to speak to us through life circumstances, but we don't hear Him or listen to His warning.

We are familiar with the function of an alarm clock or a siren. They serve to get our attention and make us aware of something that needs our attention. God did this in Scripture many times when He spoke messages through the prophets of the Old Testament. Like a loud and intrusive noise, their message was not always expected or readily accepted, but it was necessary for the people.

Although a "minor prophet," Haggai sounded the warning to the Jews who had come back home to Israel after being in Babylonian captivity for 70 years. The problem was not that they were back, but that their priorities and lives reflected selfishness, not godliness. Haggai sounded the alarm to wake everyone up spiritually and point to lessons learned in the past. The people had been back from captivity for 15 years, yet the rebuilding of God's temple had been neglected, delayed, and, eventually, ignored.

Haggai pinpointed the problem in verse 2: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt."' "<sup>4</sup> The temple had been destroyed when the Babylonians came many years earlier to take them into captivity. But when asked why they had not rebuilt, these Israelites who had come back to the land said, "We don't have time to rebuild the temple." One of the reasons that they didn't have time, or said they didn't have time, was because of opposition, as recorded in Ezra 4:1-5; 5:1-17.

But the main problem was that the people of Israel were satisfied without the temple because they were still carrying on with their religion. They were content to have God "in the vicinity" of their lives; they felt they didn't need Him "in the midst" of their lives, which is what the temple represented.

But there is a clear difference between a life that reflects true worship of God and one that just acknowledges God on the edge of life. Sometimes people need a stark reminder and an alarm to be rung before they realize their sinfulness. This problem was not unique to the time of the prophets; it is a problem still plaguing Christians even today.

We all recognize the need for a genuine revival, and we know that the alarm has been sounded. What do we need to do in order to right the ship? How do we get to the position of putting God first in our lives? The answer is simple—we need a revival that will shake our comfort and put us in a right relationship with the Lord.

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## SERMON POINTS:

### 1. DON'T BE SATISFIED HAVING GOD JUST IN THE VICINITY:

There is a difference between "God general" and "God specific"

- General means God is just there
- Specific means God is in your midst
- God is either on the outside or in the middle

There is a difference in knowing of God and experiencing God

- God is good to everybody
- God is good to you in specific ways
- You're either just acknowledging God or praising God

### 2. YOUR LIFE WILL INDICATE WHETHER YOU'VE RETURNED TO GOD:

Treat the problem, not just the symptom

- Israel's neglect of the temple was an indicator light saying something was wrong
- Don't just do part of the work

A full 180 degree turn may be necessary

- You must turn from your sin (Zechariah 1:4)
- You must also turn to the Lord (Zechariah 1:6; Luke 15:17)

### 3. THE PROBLEM IS OFTEN OUR PRIORITIES:

We make time for the things that matter most to us

- Schedules are shuffled for what we consider top priority (Haggai 1:3-4)
- Time is not often "taken" as much as "made"
- A turn to God begins to happen when our schedules change

### 4. YOU ARE RETURNING TO GOD WHEN HE TAKES TOP PRIORITY:

We don't reposition Him, we reposition ourselves

- God does not move or change who He is
- We must affix ourselves to Him as our steady point

The Bible speaks often of Him being first

- Give the first part of everything to God (Deuteronomy 26)
- Jesus Christ must have first place (Colossians 1:18; Matthew 6:33)
- He wants to be our first love (Revelation 2:1-4)
- He is to have our best, not just our leftovers

### 5. GOD DEMANDS OUR "FIRST FRUITS":

We often don't give to God our first fruits

- Most Christians give only a small percentage of what they should be giving
- God sees our lack of giving as selfishness and stealing (Malachi 3:8)

First fruits are more than money

- Energy and physical work are also fruits
- Focus and a clear mind are important fruits

### 6. WE MUST CONSIDER OUR WAYS:

We must think about what we're doing for the Lord

- We must consider what the Lord says before acting (Malachi 1:7)
- Our efforts are in vain if we don't obey the Lord

Our contentment can only be found in the Lord

- Paul agrees that the secret of contentment is the Lord (Philippians 4:11-12)
- Being constantly discontent is a sign of a needed heart change

## SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

### SOUNDING THE ALARM:

I'm sure we all have alarm clocks sitting by our beds or on our phones that play a pivotal part of our daily routine. They are set the night before to alert us that it's time to wake up and start our day. They often go off during a very inconvenient time, but nonetheless they go off and stir us out of bed. We can try to ignore them, we can reset them, and even resist the call of the alarm, but they demand an immediate response.

### REFORMATION VS. REVIVAL:

Reformation is a change mostly on the outside. Reformation changes your looks, just as some new clothes can change your appearance. If you go shopping at the right place, you can change your appearance; have a reformation. That doesn't mean you've changed who you are, however. It just means that you have changed how you look. A new hairstyle or even new contact lenses or glasses can be a reformation, but that's not a revival because revival comes from within.

God had alarm clocks in the Bible called His prophets. Prophets were called in to wake the people up and alert them to something that God wanted them to hear. Just like our modern alarm clocks, the prophets were often unappreciated and

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people tried to ignore or even resist them. But God wanted His people to be roused out of their cozy situation so that He could accomplish something great with them.

### **INDICATOR LIGHTS:**

Our vehicles all have indicator lights, or “dummy lights.” These lights tell us that there is a bigger, deeper problem with our vehicle. The actual indicator light is not the problem, but it functions to tell us that something is not working properly. We can try to turn off the indicator light, but that doesn’t mean we’ve fixed the problem that can strand us. Many folk want to come to church knowing there is an indicator light problem, but they just want the warning light turned off for their convenience.

### **MAKING TIME:**

It’s amazing what happens to schedules during football season, especially here in the Dallas area. People always say they don’t have time to do this or that, but all of a sudden at three o’clock on Sunday afternoon, people have three or four hours to watch the Dallas Cowboys. They will even rearrange or push back their schedules to accommodate the game watching time.

### **BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:**

#### **THE TEMPLE:**

The Old Testament temple was much more than just a building. It was the physical dwelling place of the glory of God, the representation of God among His people.

#### **OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS:**

(Books of Isaiah-Malachi) There are five “Major Prophets” in the Bible: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and twelve “Minor Prophets”: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The Major Prophets are considered so because they are longer and their implications are more worldwide in nature. The Minor Prophets are called so because their books are shorter and their implications are more localized in their sweep. But all of these books are important to read and are the inspired Word of God

#### **BOOK OF DANIEL:**

(Daniel 3) The familiar story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego takes place during this time of Babylonian and Persian captivity before the people of Israel return home. Daniel and his friends were carried off in this captivity to serve the Babylonian

King Nebuchadnezzar. God used them in mighty ways and gave them positions of leadership to display His might and power. This well-known story was perhaps the greatest display of God’s power over the power of the false gods and earthly kings.

### **PERSIAN EMPIRE:**

(Haggai 1) Haggai prophesied during the Persian period of Jewish history. They started in Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, but the Babylonian kingdom was taken over by the kingdom of the Persians and Medes. King Cyrus of Persia took Babylon, and the Jews were shortly thereafter allowed to begin returning home. The biblical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, and Zechariah take place during this time period of about 200 years. Persian kings such as Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes played an important role as they allowed the Jews to return home to Jerusalem and God allowed favor to rest on His people, also fulfilling prophecy of their 70-year captivity followed by a return home.

### **SERMON LINES:**

This sermon will help you learn how to bring God from the “vicinity” of your life into your midst, which is His manifest presence.

### **QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:**

“Many of us came to church today with God in our general vicinity, but we’re going to go home and He’s still not in the midst. But there’s a big difference between general God and specific God.”

“A lot of folks come to church to fix the ‘indicator light’ in their lives that tells them something is wrong. They want to address the light, but not the problem the light is pointing to.”

“Once you put God first, once He becomes your priority, you not only turn from your sin, you are returning to your first love. You are putting God first and therefore calling God down in your midst. Our problem is we are satisfied with a leftover relationship with God.”

“There is no problem in being blessed, but there is a problem when you leave God out of the blessing.”

“If you’ve returned to the Lord, He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all you can ask or think. If you’ve returned to the Lord, then He can sustain you during the rough times.”